Identity theory as a theoretical framework to understand attrition for university students in transition.

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Abstract

There have been extensive research done with a view to explaining the processes of transition into tertiary study and the factors that may associated with student attrition. This paper consolidates the authors’ research in relation to the transition of students into adult and tertiary bridging programs and undergraduate university study and presents an alternative approach to the use of objective conditions, such as financial challenges and first-in-family status, in explaining the attrition phenomenon. Identity theory is used as the basis to develop a theoretical framework that will assist educators working in these areas to engage more fully with and assist students to develop the academic and scholarly identity necessary to sustain appropriate and effective academic behaviours during the transition into tertiary education.

This article was presented at the 2015 STARS Conference in Melbourne, Australia in July 2015 and selected for publication in Student Success Volume 6, Issue 2.

Access published article https://studentsuccessjournal.org/article/view/286